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## THE HEMISPHERE

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

## Exile of the General

The man most responsible for bringing the U.S. into the Dominican civil war was forcibly packed off to exile last week—and most of the force came from the U.S. The hasty departure of General Elías Wessin y Wessin was intended to preserve and strengthen the precarious truce between loyalists and



WESSIN Y WESSIN

"I cannot be happy."

rebels on which the country's newly installed provisional government depends. Yet at week's end it was not at all certain that the maneuver had accomplished its purpose—indeed, it may even have heightened the tensions.

A tough brigadier who commanded with virtual autonomy the 1,700 crack troops of the Armed Forces Training Center at San Isidro, nine miles east of Santo Domingo, Wessin y Wessin, 40, was the key man in the fall of President Juan Bosch's inept, Red-pampering government in 1963. He was one of the first to recognize Castroite influence in the pro-Bosch revolt against Donald Reid Cabral last spring (TIME cover, May 7). Calling for U.S. help, he sent his tanks and F-51 fighters to contain the rebels in a corner of downtown Santo Domingo. For this, he earned the undying enmity of the rebels, who vilify him by parroting cries of "genocide."

On the Alert. Since then, Wessin y Wessin had kept out of sight at San Isidro, silent and brooding. Then last week Provisional President Héctor García-Godoy bowed to the rebels with a decree abolishing Wessin y Wessin's command. That brought the general to life. The San Isidro airbase radio crackled with bitter charges of Communist infiltration. "We are on the alert!" The threat of

renewed fighting sent waves of panic through Santo Domingo. Both the OAS and the U.S. agreed that Wessin y Wessin had to go.

For five days the general was urged to step aside quietly by high-ranking loyalist colleagues, García-Godoy and U.S. Special Delegate Ellsworth Bunker, the able diplomat who earned high praise from President Johnson last week for his efforts throughout the crisis. At one point, Wessin y Wessin reported that the CIA had offered to buy his modest \$18,000 house for \$50,000. The U.S. countered that the \$50,000 was his own idea. Through it all, Wessin y Wessin refused to budge.

At last, six limousines, escorted by Brazilian marines and U.S. paratroopers, hauled up in front of Wessin's house near San Isidro. In the cars were Dominican Armed Forces Secretary Commodore Francisco Rivera Caminero, Brazilian General Hugo Panasco Alvim, commander of the OAS peace force, and his deputy, Lieut. General Bruce Palmer, commander of the 82nd Airborne. The brass trooped into the house and trooped out again accompanied by Wessin y Wessin. Two hours later he was on his way to exile in the U.S.

"Not Finished." On TV that night García-Godoy explained that Wessin y Wessin "has been declared in a state of retirement, and has been designated Consul General of the Republic in Miami, Florida." Arriving in Miami, Wessin y Wessin said he would accept the consul's job. "I will serve," he announced, "but in the meantime we are not finished with the Communists, so I cannot be happy." Nor were his loyalist supporters, who complained that the new government had been too kind to the left in its first week. Even the U.S. was upset by García-Godoy's choice of a far-leftist lawyer, one Manuel Ramón Morel, as his attorney general.

Having got rid of Wessin y Wessin, the rebels clamored for the ouster of other loyalist officers. Rebel leaders said they would refuse to disarm unless "all the genocide military go—not just Wessin!" The Castroite 14th of June group was openly calling for rebels to keep their weapons, and plane-loads of exiles were streaming back to Santo Domingo to participate in a "gigantic" rebel rally this week.

Among the early returnees is supposed to be Juan Bosch, who sat out the revolution in Puerto Rico, and is expected to campaign for President in the elections next year. To celebrate his arrival, Bosch supporters are already planning another huge rally. All of which could bring on more fireworks, and a deeper mire for the U.S. and OAS. For now, having kicked out Wessin y Wessin, the rebels are hardly less tough toward the Communists still in the Dominican Republic.

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